

Staying fit on the job: Topics in a work-related individual coaching

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Background

Work is an important area of life. It can be a positive source of self-fulfillment but also brings challenges (Sohail & Rehman, 2015). Under the modern cognitive and social work demands, persons with mental health problems have increasingly more problems on the job (Rajgopal, 2010) or even sick leave and work disability (Muschalla & Linden, 2014). Also, bureaucracy and increasingly complicated rules lead to increased work quantity which is perceived as stressful even for many mentally healthy people. As part of the H-Work project, interventions for improving mental health and healthy coping in the workplace are presently evaluated in five EU countries. We report outcomes from an individual work coaching for employees in public and private organizations in Germany.

Methods

An individual coaching consistent of 3 sessions (behavior- and situation analysis, practical exercise, reflection) was offered to employees of a university and other public and private organization in the region. All coaching sessions are conducted by the same behavior-therapeutically trained psychologist. Sessions were done in presence or video. By means of an initial behavior and situation analysis (SORKC), the coaching content was individually aligned to the participants needs. Alternative behaviors for problematic work situations were practiced and reflected. Coaching participants filled in self-rating questionnaires on their perceived work-relevant capacities (Mini-ICF-APP-S), work ability (WAI) and work coping (JoCoRi) before the first and after the third coaching session.

Results

We completed coaching (3 sessions each) with 142 participants. There were 3 dropouts. 68 participants are from *Education & Research*, 74 participants are from other industries (Table 1). An overview of the participants' topics shows 52 issues of social interactions and 90 participants with work structure or work overload issues (Table 1). Participants improved in work ability, work coping from before to after the 3 sessions (Figure 1-4).

Practical implications

The advantages of the individual coaching are the combination of individual focus and the economic format of three sessions.

It has already been demonstrated that individual counseling is often more effective than preventive group interventions (e.g. Reynolds, 1997).

According to our findings, the individual coaching may have the potential to increase the self-assessment of work-relevant capacities, work ability and active coping strategies of employees in very different workplaces.

Table 1. Work domains and coaching topics of the coaching participants

Work domains	N = 142	Coaching topics	N = 142
Services & Craft	4	Work role stressors	12
Energy & Environment	2	Workload	34
Media	3	Situational constraints	8
Advertising & Marketing	2	Job demands-job-control	11
Trade	2	Social characteristics	52
Finance, Real Estate & Insurance	10	Career-related concerns	13
Technology & Communication	2	Job conditions	12
Metal & Electronics	8		
Economy & Politics	3		
Pharmacy & Health	38		
Education & Research	68		

Figure 1. Capacity impairment measured by Mini-ICF-APP-S before and after coaching (N=139)

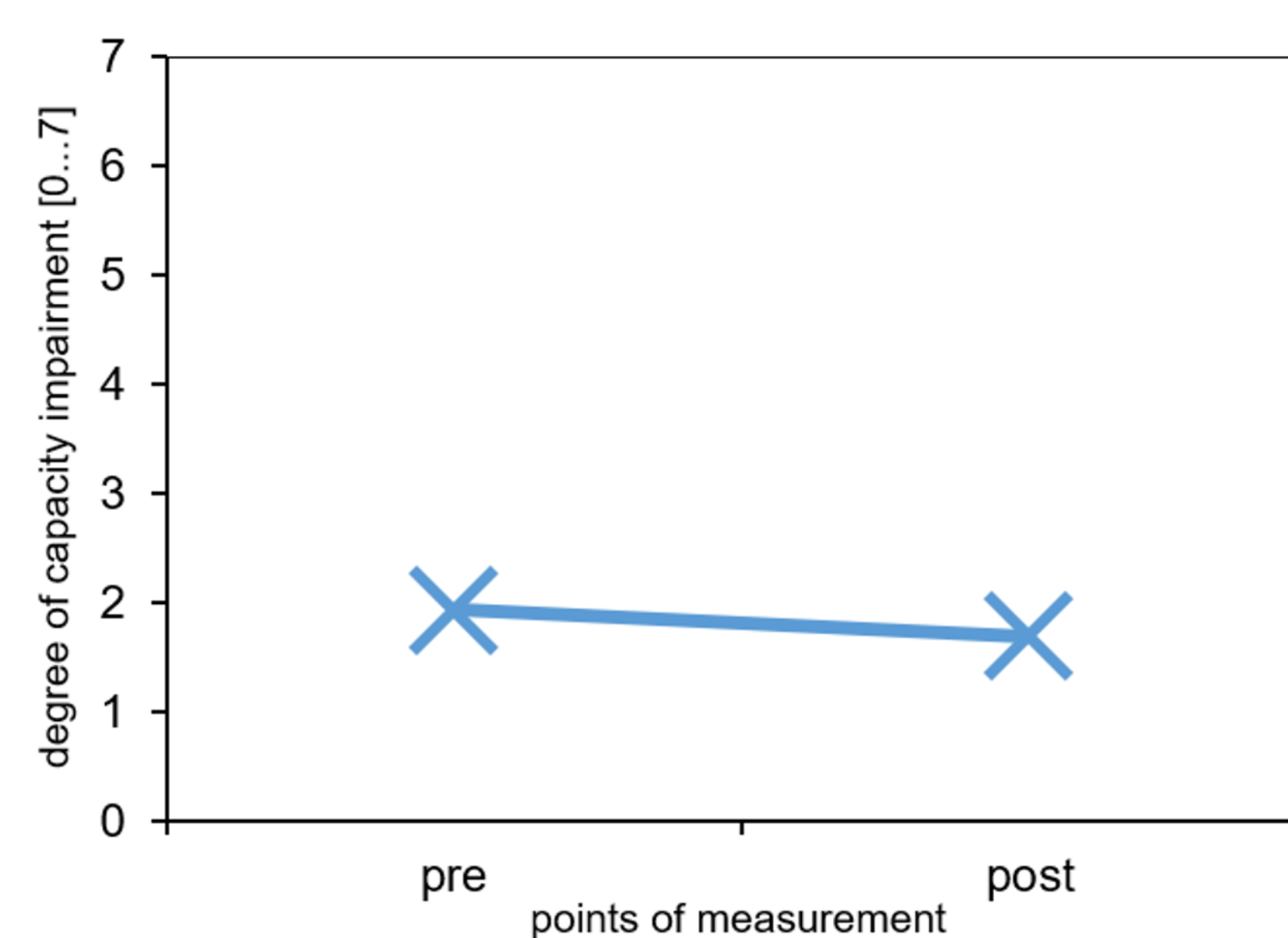


Figure 2. Prognosis of work ability in two years measured by Work-Ability-Index before and after coaching (N=139)

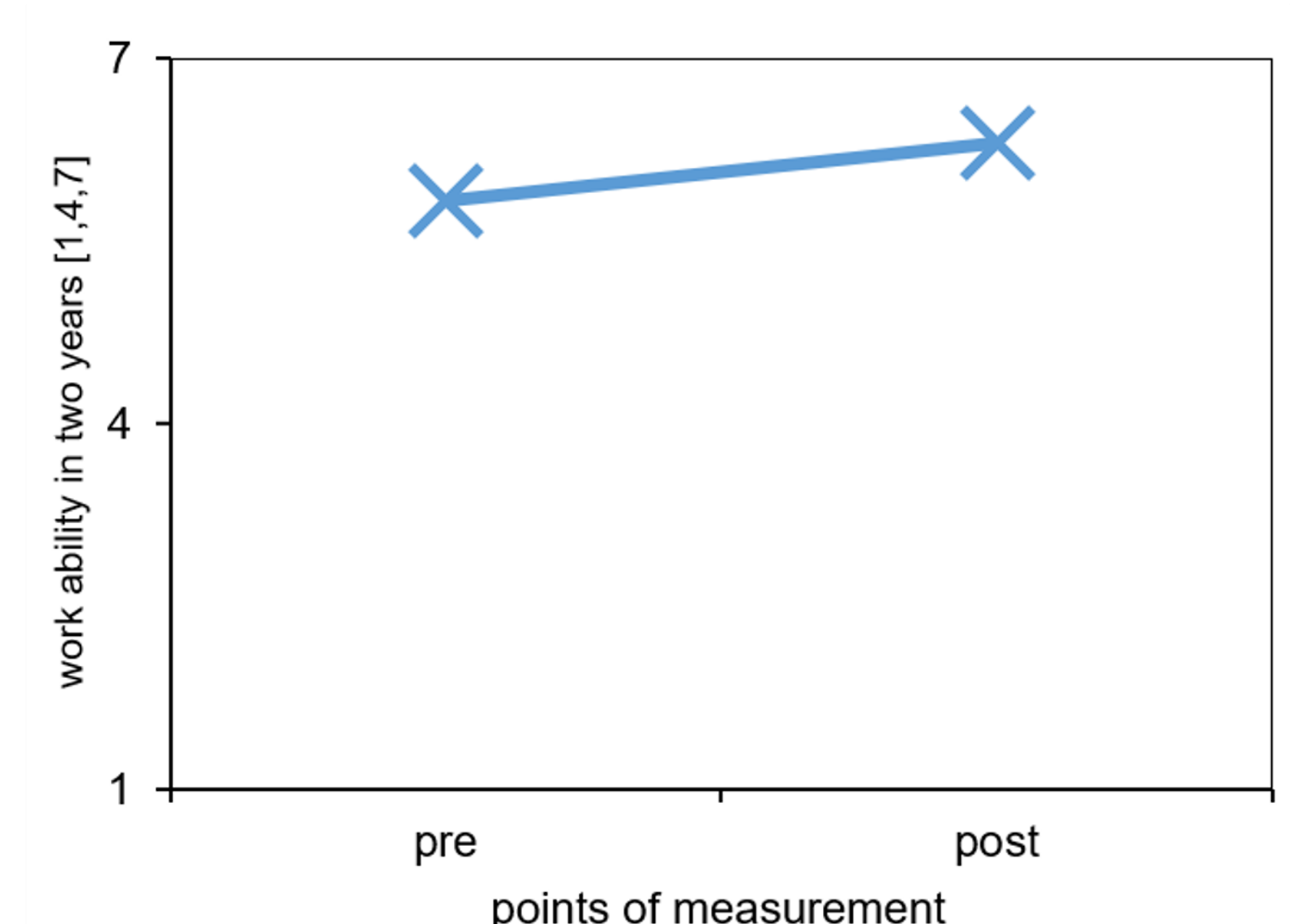


Figure 3. Work ability measured by Work-Ability-Index before and after coaching (N=139)

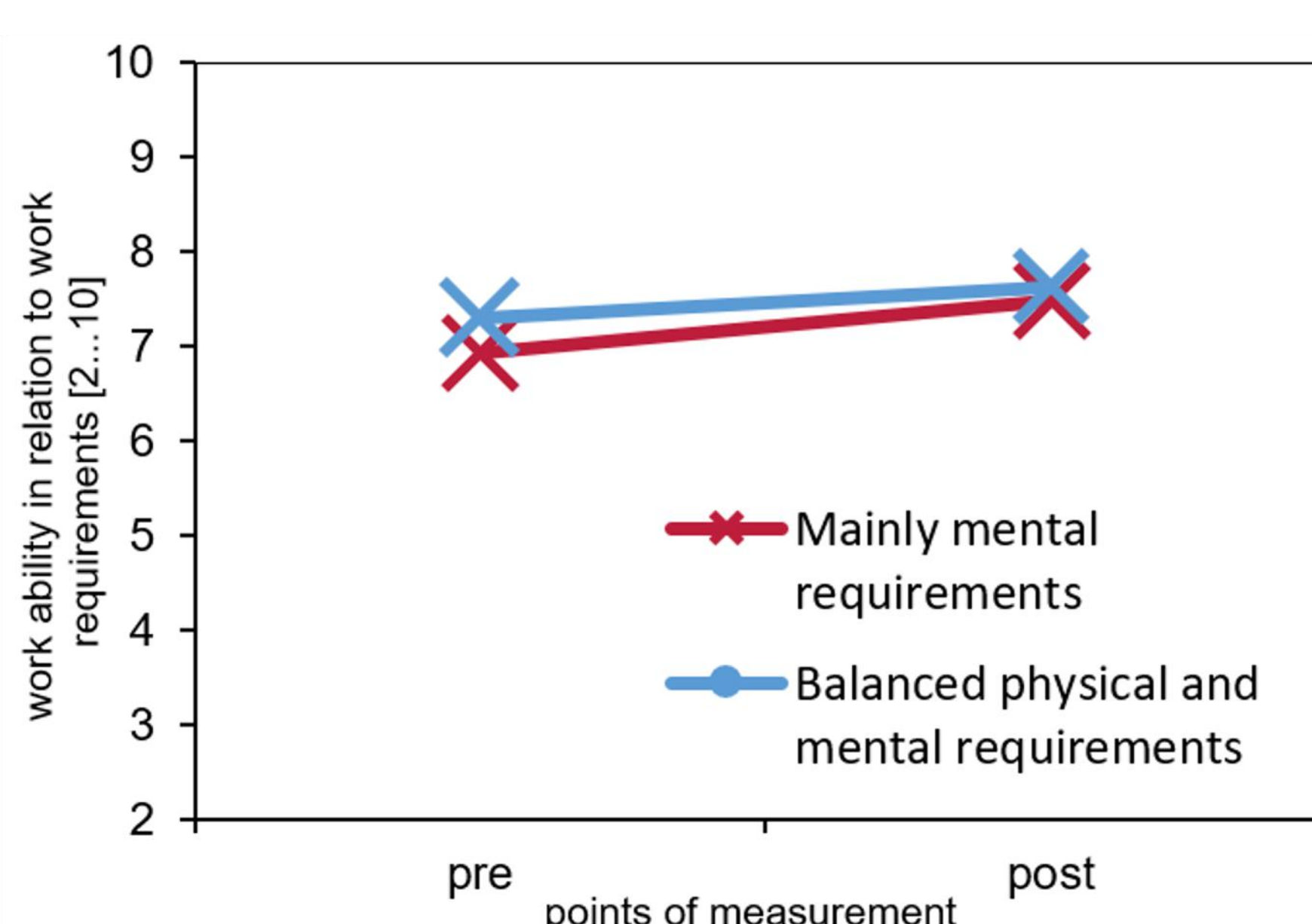
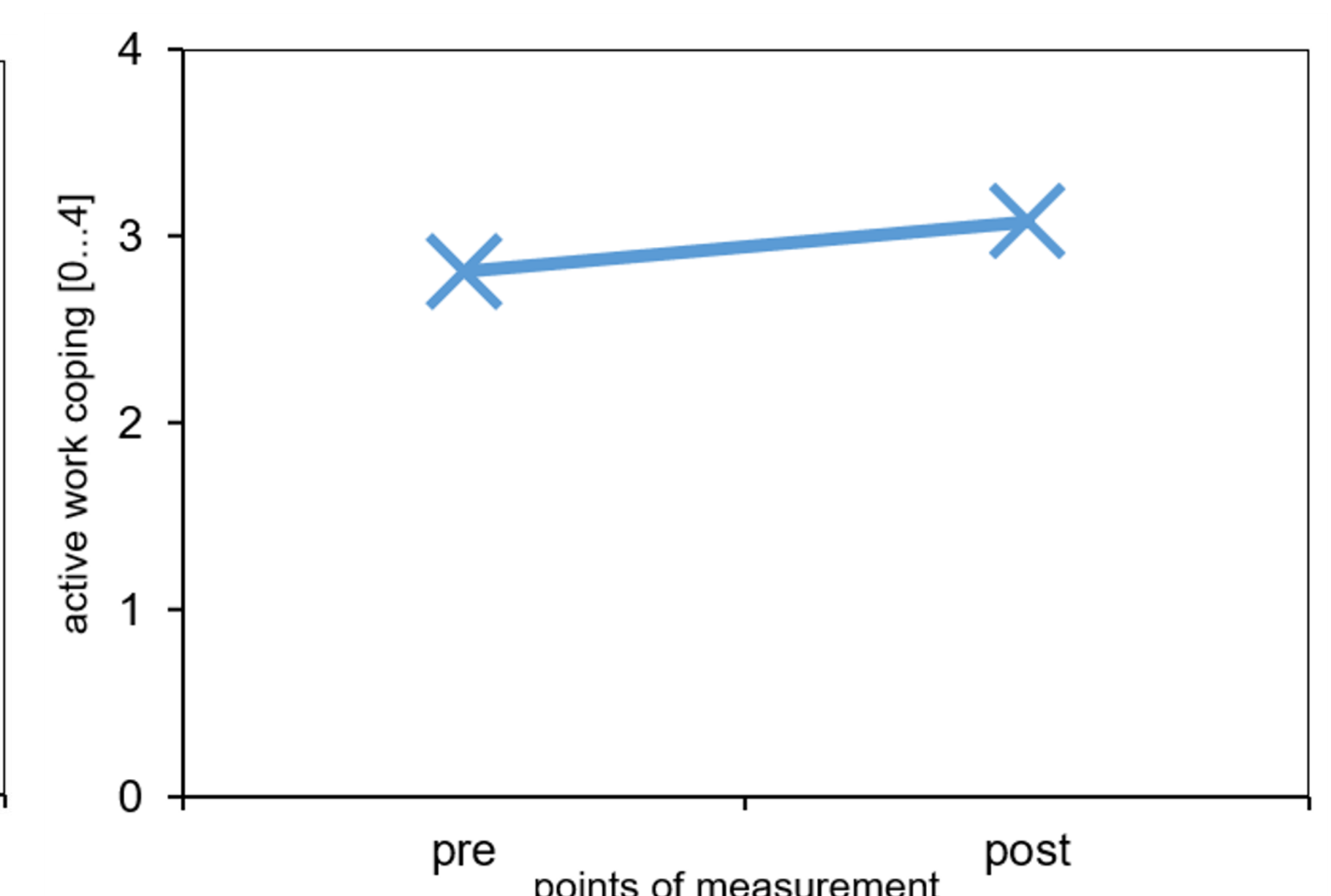


Figure 4. Active work coping measured by JoCoRi before and after coaching (N=139)



References

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